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AND THE TOKENS OF HIS GLORY. *“*

Bahá'u'lláh

INVESTIGATE *Bahá'u'lláh*

AN INVITATION FROM J. PETER SMITH

INVESTIGATE *Bahá'u'lláh*

A Personal Journey and Invitation

from

J. Peter Smith



Bahá'í Publishing Trust
New Delhi, India

“Verily, I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised One. The call of God hath been raised, and the light of His countenance hath been lifted up upon men. It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and to gaze, with an open and unbiased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the proofs of His Mission, and the tokens of His glory.”

Bahá'u'lláh



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Are you a Bahá'í and unaware of it?

I found I was!

Why should you, as a believer in Jesus Christ, investigate the claim made by Bahá'u'lláh?

The following reflects my own perspective and process as well as my thinking patterns when I investigated the claim made by Bahá'u'lláh and was confronted with the idea and possibility that Christ's promise had been fulfilled.

I found clear answers to the questions I raised and have included many of these in this booklet. The reader is also encouraged to engage in her/his own discovery and write down her/his own findings.

One of the first principles I found in the Bahá'í Faith, raised to the level of individual justice was the right of every individual to investigate truth. It is not always easy to do this; many barriers present themselves, such as believing something is right or good because my parents, friends or neighbours did.

However, I have been given the capacity to question and inquire even though it might be challenging.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Who is this? What does this mean? Is this a person? This word seemed very strange to my western experience when I first encountered it. I had no frame of reference even to be able to pronounce it. I discovered that it was of Arabic derivation, and pronounced (Baw-haw-oo-law) and had the following

meanings: 'The Glory of the Lord', 'The Glory of God', 'The Light of God'.

I encountered the writings of Bahá'u'lláh in 1980. I clearly remember the strong feelings I had of utter scepticism and disbelief, bordering on anger when I read the claims Bahá'u'lláh had made.

My younger brother had become a member of the Bahá'í Faith and out of concern that maybe he had joined some strange organization or worse yet, a cult, I asked him what it meant to be a Bahá'í. He said a Bahá'í was a person who recognized Bahá'u'lláh and that Bahá'u'lláh was a person who in 1863 claimed to be the 'Glory of God'—the fulfilment of the promise of all the prophets of past generations. The central message brought by Bahá'u'lláh was that of the oneness of God, oneness of religions, and oneness of humanity and that His teachings would unite the human race. My brother suggested if I wanted to know more about it, it might be easier for me to read something about the Bahá'í Faith for myself, rather than for him to give me his feeble understanding of what he thought this was.

I wasn't really that interested in hearing more, so I refrained. After a long space in time it occurred to me that my brother was making some very positive changes in his attitude towards things and his approach to life. I wondered whether this had anything to do with his having become a Bahá'í. After a series of critical incidents in my own life I decided to read something about this for myself. After reading a few pamphlets that I saw lying around at my brother's place, I borrowed a book *The Promised Day is Come* from a Bahá'í friend of his and started reading it. The author, Shoghi Effendi, was frequently quoting Bahá'u'lláh who was identifying that the Day of Judgement had arrived. It wasn't long before it suddenly hit me! Bahá'u'lláh was making an incredulous claim and encouraging all mankind to investigate this claim. He claimed very clearly to be the Promised One of all ages, the Spirit, the Comforter as promised by Christ, no less!

How could this be? I had attended a private Lutheran University and studied a course in comparative religions—why had I not heard of this before? This could not be really true or everyone, everywhere would have known about it, wouldn't they? I thought back to my knowledge of early Christianity and realized that Christianity was not at all well known in its first 300 years. But how could this be?

In an angry tone, I called my brother and told him that I thought he was crazy to believe in some person making a claim like this. I promised him that I would take the time to prove to both him and myself that this claim was not only impossible but frankly crazy.

I had been raised and confirmed as a Christian and believed that Christ was the One and only Son of God! I never really had thought about the fact that the Spirit of Christ might actually return. I was interested in following my strong feelings about disproving Bahá'u'lláh's claim.

Where did those feelings come from? Why was I angered? Why should I care about spending my time to disprove this? Was it due to the love and concern I had for my brother?

Was I betraying my belief in Christ or denying Him by investigating this claim? Ringing loudly in my mind was Christ's statement:

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14: 6

Could this verse be interpreted in some other way? If God's way and truth was limited only to Jesus, what about the claims made by Buddha, Moses, Mohammed, etc. How could God who created all humanity expect the whole world to only know God through Jesus? Many in the world had been fighting about this for so long. However, to keep my promise was important for me, I realised, so I set out to investigate this claim further.

INVESTIGATE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

I checked a local public library and found that they did have one or two books on the Bahá'í Faith. There were also references to Bahá'í in the encyclopaedia. I wasn't prepared to buy any books, so I asked to borrow books from Bahá'ís in the community including some from my brother. They were happy to lend their books and I never was made to feel uncomfortable or foolish about doing this.

The books I read were:

- *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*,
- *The Synopsis and Codification of the Laws of The Kitab-i-Aqdas*,
- *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* by J.E. Esslemont,
- *Some Answered Questions* by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and
- *Thief in the Night* by William Sears.

The author William Sears was a journalist and had also spent time investigating this claim. I read *Thief in the Night* cover to cover. It helped me to frame some of my own questions and investigate the answers for myself. Some of the questions I was asking myself had been researched by William Sears. I found that I had other questions and thoughts as well. As I questioned, I constantly referred to the scriptures I had grown up with and delved into reading my King James Version of *The Holy Bible*. It had been given to me April 14, 1963 at my confirmation. I hadn't read it for a number of years. I used it as a working document, highlights and all. I pursued this as a serious study. I did not know what or understand why I was so driven.

(Note to the reader: You might also want to read a more recent compilation "*The Proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission*")



I soon found the answer to my first question! Should I be investigating this claim of Bahá'u'lláh's?

YES!

CHRIST'S COMMAND

I was very surprised to find the answer to this question to be **Yes**. In fact, if I did not investigate this claim, according to Christ, could I consider myself a follower of His?

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever"

John 14: 15-16

"If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love"

John 15: 10

He said His followers would keep His commandments. It is stated that those who question are among the wise and faithful.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God"

I John 4: 1, 2

"The wise in heart will receive commandments..."

Proverbs 10: 8

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost"

1 Corinthians 12: 3

Here I was encouraged to keep Christ's covenant by putting Bahá'u'lláh's claim to the test and *try the spirits*. Christ gives the exact method of how to test the spirits:

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings."

John 14: 23-24

If I say I believe in Christ, would I follow His words and put the spirits to the test?

If I didn't believe, I wouldn't test the spirits. Is this why something deep inside of me was pushing me to investigate the claim of Bahá'u'lláh? Is this why I had feelings of anger? I had never expected to put my belief in Christ to this kind of test.

Over and over again throughout the scriptures Christ refers to the covenant with His followers and promises that He will pray the Father to give another Comforter; that He may abide with us for ever. He also refers to the Comforter as the Holy Ghost. Not only does He make this promise but He clearly tells us to be on our watch or guard because He may come like a 'thief in the night'.

The following are some of the quotes forewarning us of this event:

"Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days? Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof...they are those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief"

Job 24: 1-14

"Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Luke 12: 40

"But of the times and the seasons, brethern, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night...but ye, brethern are not in the darkness, that day should overtake you as a thief...Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

1st Epistle Thessalonians 5: 1-6

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"

John 14: 26

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

"Parable of the ten Virgins"

Matthew 24: 42-44.

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Luke 12: 40

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with the fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"

2 Peter 3: 10

THE CLERGY

How did the clergy respond to Bahá'u'lláh's claim? What do their doctrines say?

As I was reading the Bible I kept having strong feelings of guilt about the process I had entered into. I wondered if these feelings were coming from the years of being warned to stay on the right path by the clergy and to be wary of 'false prophets'. I could not begin to count the number of times I had heard the congregation being warned about this. I kept reflecting on Christ's words to 'try the spirits' and this kept me returning to my questions and kept me focused.

I had never realized up to this point that Christ had given such strong warnings to the clergy not to develop doctrines or attitudes to prevent their followers from investigating Christ's return. I had never heard this mentioned by clergy. I started wondering how many clergy might be aware of Bahá'u'lláh. Had they reacted in the same manner as the clergy behaved towards Christ in His day?

"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord."

Jeremiah 23: 1-2

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honereth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Matthew 15: 8-9

Christ also wrote a strong rebuke and warnings to the seven churches about not being prepared for His return which He

promised would come like the 'thief that will come in the night'. He gives a special warning to each church including one which in faithfulness is neither hot nor cold but, as He refers to, as lukewarm. To this church He states:

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth".

He repeats

"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches".

Revelation 3: 16, 13

Were the seven churches the seven prior major world religions? From these warnings and my experience to date I realized that it was highly probable that the clergy and churches have been preventing their parishioners from investigating any claims. Some churches I had experienced had doctrines forbidding the followers from questioning the authority of the church. Was this perhaps the subject of Christ's warning?

It was interesting to read what Bahá'u'lláh had boldly written to the world's leaders from His prison cell in 'Akká, circa 1869, including a message to Pope Pius IX:

O Pope! Rend the veils asunder. He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained... He, verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time. Beware that thou dispute not with Him even as the Pharisees disputed with Him (Jesus) without a clear token or proof. On His right hand flow the living waters of grace, and on His left the choice Wine of justice, whilst before Him march the angels of Paradise, bearing the banners of His signs. Beware lest any name debar thee from God, the Creator of earth and heaven. Leave thou the world behind thee, and turn towards thy Lord, through Whom the whole earth hath been illumined... Dwellest thou in

palaces whilst He Who is the King of Revelation liveth in the most desolate of abodes?... Arise in the name of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, amidst the peoples of the earth, and seize thou the Cup of Life with the hands of confidence, and first drink thou therefrom, and proffer it then to such as turn towards it amongst the peoples of all faiths...

Call thou to remembrance Him Who was the Spirit (Jesus), Who when He came, the most learned of His age pronounced judgement against Him in His own country, whilst he who was only a fisherman believed in Him. Take heed, then, ye men of understanding heart! Thou, in truth, art one of the suns of the heaven of His names. Guard thyself, lest darkness spread its veils over thee, and fold thee away from His light... Consider those who opposed the Son (Jesus), when He came unto them with sovereignty and power. How many the Pharisees who were waiting to behold Him, and were lamenting over their separation from Him! And yet, when the fragrance of His coming was wafted over them, and His beauty was unveiled, they turned aside from Him and disputed with Him... None save a very few, who were destitute of any power amongst men, turned towards His face. And yet, today, every man endowed with power and invested with sovereignty prideth himself on His Name! In like manner, consider how numerous, in these days, are the monks who, in My Name, have secluded themselves in their churches, and who, when the appointed time was fulfilled, and We unveiled Our beauty, knew Us not, though they call upon Me at eventide and at dawn....

The Word which the Son concealed is made manifest. It hath been sent down in the form of the human temple in this day. Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous... This is the day whereon the Rock (Peter) crieth out and shouteth, and celebrateth the praise of its Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most High, saying: 'Lo! The Father is come,

and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled!...' My body longeth for the cross, and Mine head waiteth the thrust of the spear, in the path of the All-Merciful, that the world may be purged from its transgressions....

Bahá'u'lláh, The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 83-85

O Leaders of religion! Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring balance established amongst men. In this most perfect balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it.

The eye of My loving-kindness weepeth sore over you, inasmuch as ye have failed to recognize the One upon Whom ye have been calling in the daytime and in the night season, at even and at morn. Advance, O people, with snow-white faces and radiant hearts, unto the blest and crimson Spot, wherein the Sadratu'l-Muntahá is calling: 'Verily, there is none other God beside Me, the Omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting!'

O ye leaders of religion! Who is the man amongst you that can rival Me in vision or insight? Where is he to be found that dareth to claim to be My equal in utterance or wisdom? No, by My Lord, the All-Merciful! All on the earth shall pass away; and this is the face of your Lord, the Almighty, the Well-Beloved."

Summons to the World's Religious Leaders, pp. 73-74

In 1995, I came across a document published by the United Church of Canada entitled "Toward a Renewed Understanding of Ecumenism"—Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, published in 1992. It confirmed the approach I took during my investigation. It addresses the specific stumbling block to investigation tenaciously held by Christians and mentioned in the Gospel of John:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me" 14:6

I quote from this document:

"How might this passage be interpreted in light of the vision of whole-world ecumenism? Can it not be affirmed that his way was the way of love with justice and peace, that his life was *"full of the Holy Spirit"* (Luke 4:1), and that his truth was the truth of God's Reign that extends over the whole creation? Jesus' way and truth and life are indeed God's way and truth and life. But God's way and truth and life are not limited to Jesus and his followers. The biblical witness, which tells of God's way and truth and life are not limited to Jesus and his followers. The biblical witness, which tells of God's actions and peoples' responses over hundreds of years, affirms the freedom of God to bring God's way and truth and life into view in the lives of people of other faiths and cultures."

This church does not seem to be preventing its followers from investigating.

PUTTING THE SPIRIT TO THE TEST

How was I to test Bahá'u'lláh's claim?

I found that the Bible was full of guidance on this question and provided specific criteria to *test the spirits* as to the legitimacy of claims being made. It became obvious to me, as I sifted through my questions, that this could only be accomplished by individual investigation and that I was quite capable of doing this.

Christ had made it clear that this is what was expected of a follower. I wrote some of these references down as I found them and reformatted them in the form of questions. If you feel the challenge as I did, I encourage you to also investigate for yourself. I have organized these questions, tests and findings into topic areas.

THE APPROACH AND ANNOUNCEMENT

Had Bahá'u'lláh come like a thief in the night as Christ tried to warn us?

I reflected about how many years I had been asleep by never even imagining the possibility that Christ might return.

"Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days? Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof...they are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief"

Job 24:1-14

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not"

Luke 12: 40

"But of the times and the seasons, brethern, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night...but ye, brethern, are not in the darkness, that day should overtake you as a thief. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

Thessalonians 5: 1-6

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"

John 14: 26

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and

would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

"Parable of the ten Virgins"

Matthew 24: 42-44

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Luke 12: 40

"But the day of the Lord will come as a **thief in the night**; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with the fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"

2 Peter 3: 10

I reflected on this idea of 'a thief in the night', and thought of the following situations: a thief coming in the night would be quiet, and wouldn't make a great or loud noise; a thief in the night wouldn't be visible to many people, however, may be known only to those who accompanied him; coming in the night he would be cloaked in darkness or might be seen through the pale light of the moon; anyone who was on watch would have to be very attentive, to look and listen carefully. Those who slept might never be aware that the thief had come. If they found that things had been changed, especially if something had been taken away by the thief, they would be angered and feel vulnerable. They might want to know who the thief was, where the thief went and how they could find the thief for the purpose of injuring him or getting vengeance.

I learned from my investigation that Bahá'u'lláh became conscious of His own station; however, He did not reveal this to anyone until almost ten years had passed. When He announced His claim to a small number of individuals in 1863, He also kept this very quiet. Eventually, more and more people recognized Bahá'u'lláh as the Father of the poor and as a Holy Man. Prior to

announcing His claim, He had been arrested in Tehran for following the Báb (refer to pages 28-29) and was banished to Baghdad, later to Constantinople and Adrianople, and finally to 'Akká, (Akko, Acre), as a political prisoner of the Ottoman Empire on behalf of the Persian monarchy.

...We have said:

"He Who is the Father is come, and the Son (Jesus Christ), in the holy vale, crieth out: 'Here am I, here am I, O Lord, my God!', whilst Sinai circleth round the House, and the Burning Bush calleth aloud: 'The All-Bounteous is come mounted upon the clouds! Blessed is he that draweth nigh unto Him, and woe betide them that are far away.'"

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 57

Does Bahá'u'lláh, like Christ, bear witness unto Himself? Does He announce His own Revelation?

Christ says..

"I am the one that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

John 8:18

Bahá'u'lláh clearly tells us that He is the Promised One of all ages.

O Kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God's, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Worship none but God, and, with radiant hearts, lift up your faces unto your Lord, the Lord of all names. This is a Revelation to which whatever ye possess can never be compared, could ye but know it. We see you rejoicing in that which ye have amassed for others, and shutting out yourselves from the worlds which naught except My Guarded Tablet can reckon.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 5

Beware lest ye speak of duality in regard to My Self, for all the atoms of the earth proclaim that there is none other God but Him, the One, the Single, the Mighty, the Loving. From the beginning that hath no beginning I have proclaimed, from the realm of eternity, that I am God, none other God is there save Me, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting; and unto the end that hath no end I shall proclaim, amidst the kingdom of names, that I am God, none other God is there beside Me, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Say: Lordship is My Name, whereof I have created manifestations in the world of being, while We Ourselves remain sanctified above them, would ye but ponder this truth. And Godhead is My Name, whereof We have created exponents whose power shall encompass the people of the earth and make them true worshippers of God, could ye but recognize it. Thus should ye regard all Our Names, if ye be endued with insight.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 24

When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee, I am moved to proclaim to all created things "verily I am God"; and when I consider my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, p. 233

REFERENCE TO CHRIST

Did Bahá'u'lláh profess to be the Spirit of God and confess that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh and was of God?

1 John 4: 1-3

And further We have said: "He Who is the Father is come, and the Son (Jesus Christ), in the holy vale, crieth out: 'Here am I, here am I, O Lord, my God!'", whilst Sinai circled round the House, and the Burning Bush calleth aloud: 'The All-Bounteous is come mounted upon the clouds! Blessed is he that draweth nigh unto Him, and woe betide them that are far away.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 57

During the thirty years of Christ's life, there were only eleven believers, and at the end of His life, even they wavered, until Mary Magdalen confirmed them in the truth of God—but the radiance of this Sun has been felt from here to America, and notwithstanding all this, the violaters desire to quench the Light of the Covenant of God. They wish to extinguish this Light, but they do not know that the Light of God's Covenant is kindled and comes from the Presence of God, and though it were surrounded by all the winds of the earth, they could not prevail to blow it out.

Bahá'í Prayers 9, pp. 35-36

Did Bahá'u'lláh say He was Christ?

If He did He would be a false prophet.

"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

Matthew 24: 5

No, Bahá'u'lláh never said He was Christ.

Were Bahá'u'lláh's writings showing things to come and did He glorify Christ?

John 16: 13-15

Yes He identified many things to come and He attested to Christ being the Spirit of God.

...that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled! This is the Word which the Son concealed, when to those around Him He said: 'Ye cannot bear it now.' And when the appointed time was fulfilled and the Hour had struck, the Word shone forth above the horizon of the Will of God. Beware, O followers of the Son, that ye cast it not behind your backs. Take ye fast hold of it.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 11

His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, said: His Holiness Jesus Christ was an educator of humanity. His teachings were altruistic; His bestowal universal. He taught mankind by the power of the Holy Spirit and not through human agency; for the human power is limited whereas the divine power is illimitable and infinite. The influence and accomplishment of Christ will attest to this.

Bahá'í World Faith, p. 249

He that married not (Jesus Christ) could find no place wherein to abide, nor where to lay His head, by reason of what the hands of the treacherous had wrought. His holiness consisted not in the things ye have believed and imagined, but rather in the things which belong unto Us. Ask, that ye may be made aware of His station which hath been exalted above the vain imaginings of all the peoples of the earth. Blessed are they that understand.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 49-50

Judge thou fairly, I adjure thee by God. What proof did the Jewish doctors adduce where with to condemn Him Who was the Spirit of God (Jesus Christ), when He came unto them with truth?

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 81

Consider the Dispensation of Jesus Christ. Behold, how all the learned men of that generation, though eagerly anticipating the coming of the Promised One, have nevertheless denied Him. Both Annas, the most learned among the divines of His day, and Caiaphas, the high priest, denounced Him and pronounced the sentence of His death.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 83

Did Bahá'u'lláh claim to be the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, and promise to abide with mankind forever ?

John 14: 16

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

John 15: 26-27

Bahá'u'lláh states:

The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him.

Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 104-105

Give ear unto that which the Dove of Eternity warbleth upon the twigs of the Divine Lote-Tree: O peoples of the earth! We sent forth him who was named John to baptize you with water, that your bodies might be cleansed for the appearance of the Messiah. He, in turn, purified you with the fire of love and the water of the spirit in anticipation of these Days whereon the All-Merciful hath purposed to cleanse you with the water of life at the hands of His loving providence. This is the Father foretold by Isaiah, and the Comforter concerning Whom the Spirit had covenanted with you. Open your eyes, O concourse of bishops, that ye may behold your Lord seated upon the Throne of might and glory.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 63

We have sent unto you John the Baptist (The Báb who was the precursor of Bahá) another time. Verily He crieth in the wilderness of the Bayan,—“O Creation of beings, make clear your eyes, the day of vision and meeting hath come nigh; and O people of the Gospel, prepare the way, for the Day whereon the Lord of Glory shall come, hath drawn nigh, prepare yourselves to enter the Kingdom.” Thus was the matter decreed on the part of God, the Cleaver of the Dawn. Harken unto the strains which

INVESTIGATE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

the Dove of Eternity hath sung upon the Branches of the Divine Lote Tree and which is vocal with the melody of "O people of the earth, We have sent unto you Him who was named John to baptize you with water that your bodies might be purified for the Appearance of Christ, and that He (Christ) hath purified you with the Fire of Love and with the Water of the Spirit, as a preparation for these days whereon the Merciful hath willed to cleanse your bodies with the Water of Life, by the hands of grace and bounty. This is indeed the Father, whereof Isaiah gave you tidings, and the Comforter from whom the Spirit (Christ) hath received His Covenant.

Bahá'í Scriptures, p. 102

Give ear, O King, unto the Voice that calleth from the Fire which burneth in this verdant Tree, on this Sinai which hath been raised above the hallowed and snow-white Spot, beyond the Everlasting City; 'Verily, there is none other God but Me, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful!' We, in truth, have sent Him Whom We aided with the Holy Spirit (Jesus Christ) that He may announce unto you this Light that hath shone forth from the horizon of the will of your Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, and Whose signs have been revealed in the West. Set your faces towards Him (Bahá'u'lláh), on this Day which God hath exalted above all other days, and whereon the All-Merciful hath shed the splendor of His effulgent glory upon all who are in heaven and all who are on earth. Arise thou to serve God and help His Cause. He, verily, will assist thee with the hosts of the seen and unseen, and will set thee king over all that whereon the sun riseth. Thy Lord, in truth, is the All-Powerful, the Almighty.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 47

What does Bahá'u'lláh say about God?

Over and over Christ says He is not God but God is the Father and He is the Son.

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"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."

John 5: 26

"For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."

John 5: 36

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"

John 4: 24

I had been brought up with the Christian doctrine called the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost all considered to be the same. This idea was not based on scripture nor found in the Holy Bible. I later learned that this idea had been created at the Council of Nicaea 325 CE following a theological interpretation by Athanasius who served as the deacon of this council.

The Roman Emperor, Constantine, forced the factions of Christians to this council to settle a theological question about the nature of Christ and His relationship to God. Here some of them agreed upon the idea of the Trinity. They also chose the books to be included in the Holy Bible.

Bahá'u'lláh states:

God in His Essence and in His own Self hath ever been unseen, inaccessible, and unknowable.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 118

To every discerning and illuminated heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the Divine Being, is immensely exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress. Far be it from His glory that human tongue should adequately recount His praise, or that human

heart comprehend His fathomless mystery. He is, and hath ever been, veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence, and will remain in His Reality everlastingly hidden from the sight of men. "No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision; He is the Subtile, the All-Perceiving."

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 46-47

I shall restate here My theme, that perchance this may assist thee in recognizing thy Creator. Know thou that God—exalted and glorified be He—doth in no wise manifest His inmost Essence and Reality. From time immemorial He hath been veiled in the eternity of His Essence and concealed in the infinitude of His own Being. And when He purposed to manifest His beauty in the kingdom of names and to reveal His glory in the realm of attributes, He brought forth His Prophets from the invisible plane to the visible, that His name "the Manifest" might be distinguished from "the Hidden" and His name "the Last" might be discerned from "the First", and that there may be fulfilled the words: "He is the First and the Last; the Seen and the Hidden; and He knoweth all things!" Thus hath He revealed these most excellent names and most exalted words in the Manifestations of His Self and the Mirrors of His Being.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, pp. 34-35

Does Bahá'u'lláh glorify God?

Christ glorifies God and states

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

John 17: 4

Bahá'u'lláh's writings and prayers continuously glorify God.

The purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, hath been to bring forth the Mystic Gems out of the mine of man—they Who are the Dawning-Places of His Cause and the Repositories of the

pearls of His knowledge; for, God Himself, glorified be He, is the Unseen, the One concealed and hidden from the eyes of men.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 13

Know thou of a certainty that the Unseen can in no wise incarnate His Essence and reveal it unto men. He is, and hath ever been, immensely exalted beyond all that can either be recounted or perceived. From His retreat of glory His voice is ever proclaiming: "Verily, I am God; there is none other God besides Me, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. I have manifested Myself unto men, and have sent down Him Who is the Day Spring of the signs of My Revelation. Through Him I have caused all creation to testify that there is none other God except Him, the Incomparable, the All-Informed, the All-Wise." He Who is everlastingly hidden from the eyes of men can never be known except through His Manifestation, and His Manifestation can adduce no greater proof of the truth of His Mission than the proof of His own Person.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 49

IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

Did He come with a new name?

Christ spoke of what the Spirit said unto the churches. He promised at least twice to come with a new name.

"...and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Revelation 2: 17

"...and I will write upon him my new name"

Revelation 3: 12

Bahá'u'lláh is certainly a new name. The name of the Spirit or the returned Christ would and could not therefore be Christ Jesus. I found several references to the glory of God which now took on a different meaning for me.

"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

The Acts 7: 55 -56

"When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

John 11: 4

"Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

John 11: 40

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

2 Corinthians 1: 20

It was also interesting to learn that in the Books of Moses He also referred to the Glory of God.

"Lo, thy sons come, whom thou sentest away, they come gathered together from the east to the west by the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the glory of God."

"For God hath appointed that every high hill, and banks of long continuance, should be cast down, and valleys filled up, to make even the ground, that Israel may go safely in the glory of God,"

From the Books of Moses—*Deuterocanonical Apocrypha*,
The Book of Baruch - Bar 4:37 ; Bar 5: 7

One of the meanings of the title "Bahá'u'lláh" is the Glory of God and knowing this made it quite obvious to me it was He who was being spoken of by Moses and Christ.

He was formally designated Bahá'u'lláh, an appellation specifically recorded in the Persian Bayan, signifying at once the glory, the light and the splendour of God, and was styled the "Lord of Lords," the "Most Great Name," the "Ancient Beauty," the "Pen of the Most High," the "Hidden Name," the "Preserved Treasure," "He Whom God will make manifest," the "Most Great Light," the "All-Highest Horizon," the "Most Great Ocean," the "Supreme Heaven," the "Pre-Existent Root," the "Self-Subsistent," the "Day-Star of the Universe," the "Great Announcement," the "Speaker on Sinai," the "Sifter of Men," the "Wronged One of the World," the "Desire of the Nations," the "Lord of the Covenant," the "Tree beyond which there is no passing."

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 94

Was He called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace?

Isaiah 9: 6

Rest thou assured that in this era of the spirit, the Kingdom of Peace will raise up its tabernacle on the summits of the world, and the commandments of the Prince of Peace will so dominate the arteries and nerves of every people as to draw into His sheltering shade all the nations on earth. From springs of love and truth and unity will the true Shepherd give His sheep to drink.

The Compilation of Compilations, vol. II, p. 158

To Israel He was neither more nor less than the incarnation of the "Everlasting Father", the "Lord of Hosts" come down "with ten thousands of saints"; to Christendom Christ returned "in the glory of the Father"; to Shí'ah Islam the return of the Imam Husayn; to Sunni Islam the descent of the "Spirit of God" (Jesus Christ); to the Zoroastrians the promised Shah-Bahram; to the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna; to the Buddhists the fifth Buddha.

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 94

HIS MISSION

Was He bringing all things to our remembrance?

John 14: 26

It seemed that these writings were bringing everything imaginable to our remembrance. Bahá'u'lláh recited this exact verse and then made the following comments.

Should it be My wish to recount all that hath been revealed in the past, I would most certainly be able to do so by virtue of that which God hath bestowed upon Me of the wonders of His knowledge and power. I have, however, contented Myself with that which was mentioned, lest thou become wearied in thy journey or feel inclined to turn back, or lest thou be overtaken by sadness and sorrow and overcome with despondency, trouble and fatigue.

Be fair in thy judgement and reflect upon these exalted utterances. Inquire, then, of those who lay claim to knowledge without a proof or testimony from God, and who remain heedless of these days wherein the Orb of knowledge and wisdom hath dawned above the horizon of Divinity, rendering unto each his due and assigning unto all their rank and measure, as to what they can say concerning these allusions. Verily, their meaning hath bewildered the minds of men, and that which they conceal of the consummate wisdom and latent knowledge of God even the most sanctified souls have been powerless to uncover.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, pp. 10-11

In like manner wilt thou comprehend the meaning of all the ambiguous verses that have been sent down concerning the question thou didst ask of this Servant Who abideth upon the seat of abasement, Who walketh upon the earth as an exile with none to befriend, comfort, aid, or assist Him, Who hath placed His whole trust in God, and Who proclaimeth at all times: "Verily we are God's, and to Him shall we return."

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 26

Did Bahá'u'lláh come to unite the people of the world and wish to bring judgement and justice to the earth?

Jeremiah 23: 3-5

I found many statements of Bahá'u'lláh encouraging mankind to focus its energies on creating unity and justice. As an example He says:

The light of men is Justice. Quench it not with the contrary winds of oppression and tyranny. The purpose of the justice is the appearance of unity among men.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 66-67

...Bahá'u'lláh declared the necessity of peace among the nations and the reality of reconciliation between the religions of the world. He announced that the fundamental basis of all religion is one, that the essence of religion is human fellowship and that the differences in belief which exist are due to dogmatic interpretation and blind imitations which are at variance with the foundations established by the Prophets of God. He proclaimed that if the reality underlying religious teaching be investigated all religions would be unified, and the purpose of God, which is love and the blending of human hearts, would be accomplished.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
p. 354

The Divine Messengers have been sent down, and their Books were revealed, for the purpose of promoting the knowledge of God, and of furthering unity and fellowship amongst men.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 12

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Daystar of Truth beareth Me witness!

So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The One true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 14

THE WAY HE CAME

Did Bahá'u'lláh enter through “the strait gate” to guide or shepherd the people (sheep)?

Matthew 7: 13-14

Christ again tells us that He that enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep... *“To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth them his own sheep by name and leadeth them out.”*

John 10: 3

Bahá'u'lláh states: *Regard men as a flock of sheep that need a shepherd for their protection. This, verily, is the truth, the certain truth.*

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 336

“The word ‘Gate’ in the Persian language was “Báb”. Mirza Ali-Muhammed assumed this title.

‘The Báb’, was born in Shiraz, in the month of October, 1819. At the age of twenty-four he heralded the advent of a universal teacher whom God would manifest, and through whom the unity of all nations would be established. The Báb (door or gate) effected a reformation of Islam, opening the way for a broader movement—for always with earnestness and zeal he cried of one who was to come after him to illumine not only Islam, but the whole world. The young reformer made his declaration in 1844 at Shiraz and afterward at Mecca, where one hundred thousand people had congregated.”

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 5

Recognizing the ‘Báb’, Bahá'u'lláh writes the following...

Thou art He, O my God, Who hath unlocked the gate of heaven with the key of Thy Name, the Ever-Blessed, the All-Powerful, the All-Glorious, the Most Great, and hast summoned all mankind to the ocean of Thy presence.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 267-268

Conversely the Báb writes of Bahá'u'lláh, *“Know thou of a certainty that whenever thou makest mention of Him Whom God shall make manifest, only then art thou making mention of God.*

The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 80

THE MESSAGE AND LANGUAGE

Were the writings of Bahá'u'lláh guidance into truth?

Revelations 3: 13-16

The Great Being saith: O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. This is the straight Path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure. Our hope is that the world's religious leaders and the rulers thereof will unitedly arise for the reformation of this age and the rehabilitation of its fortunes. Let them, after meditating on its needs, take counsel together and, through anxious and full deliberation, administer to a diseased and sorely-afflicted world the remedy it requireth....

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 215-216

Were the writings still in proverbs or was Bahá'u'lláh speaking clearly of the Father to the people?

John 16: 25

The style of Bahá'u'lláh's writings were not in proverbs, but rather in elevated and eloquent language. Bahá'u'lláh wrote in both Arabic and Persian, and the Writings that have thus far been translated into English have provided a wide scope of guidance.

Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths. Take heed that ye do not vacillate in your determination to embrace the truth of this Cause—a Cause through which the potentialities of the might of God have been revealed, and His sovereignty established. With faces beaming with joy, hasten ye unto Him. This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. Let him that seeketh, attain it; and as to him that hath refused to seek it—verily, God is Self-Sufficient, above any need of His creatures.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*,
p. 136

Were the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh professing oneness?

John 17: 22

Jesus proclaimed that He had given His disciples all they needed to bring about this oneness. I reflected on the fact that Christianity had strayed far from Christ's vision of what was possible. I knew that there were well over one thousand sects of Christianity and that was just in Canada. Were they one as Christ said they should be? The differing sects have shown hatred towards each other for hundreds of years.

I was told by my brother that Bahá'u'lláh had come to establish the oneness of God, religion and race. How many sects of Bahá'í would I find have had emerged?

I found that there were no sects—there was only one Bahá'í Faith in the world! Although there had been attempts to destroy it, due to the strength of its covenant it had flourished.

And when Thou didst purpose to demonstrate the power of Thy sovereign might, and to glorify Thy word, and to guide the steps of Thy people, Thou didst raise up from among Thy creatures One of Thy servants, Whom Thou didst send forth with the signs of Thy sovereignty, and Whom Thou didst endue with the clear tokens of Thy oneness, that He might fulfill Thy testimony unto all created things, and perfect Thy proof before all men.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*,
p. 112

Was Bahá'u'lláh encouraging oneness of nations and language?

“For my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms for then I will turn to the people a pure language that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.”

Zephaniah 3: 8-9

Bahá'u'lláh had clearly identified this need on both accounts. The following passages indicate the beauty of this vision.

The Great Being, wishing to reveal the prerequisites of the peace and tranquillity of the world and the advancement of its peoples, hath written: The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men. Such a peace demandeth that the Great Powers should resolve, for the sake of the tranquillity of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled among themselves.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*,
p. 249

...The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential. It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action..

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 249-250

Did He set up an ensign for the nations, and had He assembled the outcasts of Israel and gathered together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth?

Isaiah 11: 12

I learned that the Bahá'í community was incredibly diverse and from almost all tribes and nations imaginable. Bahá'ís reside in over 116,000 localities in 191 independent countries and 45 dependent territories and that this represented 2,112 indigenous tribes, races, and ethnic groups. I also discovered that Bahá'í literature was translated into over 800 languages. (These figures have been updated since the 1st edition and taken from *'The Bahá'í World 2005-2006'*)

The Encyclopaedia Britannica and the World Christian Encyclopaedia identified the Bahá'í Faith "as the 2nd most widely spread independent religion in the world after Christianity".

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'u'lláh's son, appointed by Him as the Centre of His Covenant, spoke of this gathering prophesied by Isaiah:

One of the great events which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that Incomparable Branch (Bahá'u'lláh) is the hoisting of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. Religious and

sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race, and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself. Universal peace and concord will be realized between all the nations, and that Incomparable Branch will gather together all Israel, signifying that in this cycle Israel will be gathered in the Holy Land, and that the Jewish people who are scattered to the East and West, South and North, will be assembled together.

Now see: these events did not take place in the Christian cycle, for the nations did not come under the One Standard which is the Divine Branch. But in this cycle of the Lord of Hosts all the nations and peoples will enter under the shadow of this Flag. In the same way, Israel, scattered all over the world, was not reassembled in the Holy Land in the Christian cycle; but in the beginning of the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh this divine promise, as is clearly stated in all the Books of the Prophets, has begun to be manifest. You can see that from all the parts of the world tribes of Jews are coming to the Holy Land; they live in villages and lands which they make their own, and day by day they are increasing to such an extent that all Palestine will become their home.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 65-66

In 1948, under an act of the United Nations, the nation of Israel was brought into being.

Would there be or might any government be upon His shoulders?

Isaiah 9: 6

I learned that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, following the writings, had raised up a global community whose administration was spiritually and democratically elected in an ideal manner which I could greatly respect. The supreme governing body, elected every

five years, is the Universal House of Justice, whose administrative offices, known as the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, is situated on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel.

I had asked this question because I could not see how Christ had any government upon his shoulders. In fact, he had clearly said at least twice that he had not come to send peace on earth but had come to bring a sword and to set man at variance against his father, daughter against mother.

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division."

Matthew 10: 34-40

How else might the years of blindly following in others' footsteps allow people to accept Christ? I wondered: are we not also guilty of this blind following? Certainly this was a pattern established by people for thousands of years.

Did Bahá'u'lláh's teachings warn against speaking evil of others or against backbiting?

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth man.

Matthew 15: 11

Backbiting is considered in the Bahá'í writings to be the most grievous of sins:

That seeker should, also, regard backbiting as grievous error, and keep himself aloof from its dominion, inasmuch as backbiting quencheth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 265

Did Bahá'u'lláh write about the progressiveness of religious truth? Would another follow Him?

Christ had spoken about the progressiveness of the truth of religion.

"For had ye believed in Moses ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me"

John 5: 46

In the day Moses was born He was the way and the light and in that day those who followed His laws were doing as God had bidden. Once Christ declared His mission He now was the light to follow, and Christ asked His followers to recognize the Comforter and obey His commandments.

One of the first passages I read written by Bahá'u'lláh explained the concept of progressiveness of revelation and religious truth:

Contemplate with thine inward eye the chain of successive Revelations that hath linked the Manifestation of Adam with that of the Báb. I testify before God that each one of these Manifestations hath been sent down through the operation of the Divine Will and Purpose, that each hath been the bearer of a specific Message, that each hath been entrusted with a divinely-revealed Book and been commissioned to unravel the mysteries of a mighty Tablet. The measure of the Revelation with which every one of them hath been identified had been definitely fore-ordained. This, verily, is a token of Our favor unto them, if ye be of those that comprehend this truth.... And when this process of progressive Revelation culminated in the stage at which His peerless, His most sacred, and exalted Countenance was to be unveiled to men's eyes, He chose to hide His own Self behind a thousand veils, lest profane and mortal eyes discover His glory.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 74-75

Incontrovertible as is this truth, its challenging character should never be allowed to obscure the purpose, or distort the principle, underlying the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh—utterances that have established for all time the absolute oneness of all the Prophets, Himself included, whether belonging to the past or to the future.

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 166

Bahá'u'lláh also refers to the fact that another manifestation would be sent by God after the passing of at least one thousand years.

Was this at a time when the earth had been defiled under its inhabitants, because they had transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance and broken the everlasting covenant?

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof: because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."

Isaiah 24: 5

This covenant I remembered from previous study to be God's promise to always give mankind guidance and mankind's promise to remember and believe in God. Reading any daily paper surely indicated to me our earth had been and was being defiled.

Bahá'u'lláh stated:

The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight, that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue. And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then, and only then, will the Divine Standard be unfurled, and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 118-119

OTHER IMPORTANT SIGNS

Did He follow the Morning Star?

And I will give him the morning star.

Revelation 2: 28

The morning star is usually considered as the planet Venus, which is seen just before the sun rises in the eastern sky. This to me was the first metaphor so far encountered. This passage to my mind could be interpreted as the star that preceded Bahá'u'lláh. I reflected on the fact that the Báb could be considered as the morning star to this Faith.

I later learned that some Bahá'is considered the Báb to be the morning star promised in the Zoroastrian religion.

Had the Gospel of the Kingdom been preached in all the world and onto all the nations?

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Matthew 24: 14

I had learned in previous reading that this was thought by many historians to have occurred by the year 1844. The Bible had reached most of the world by this point.

Had the Lord punished the high ones that are on high and the kings of the earth? Were they gathered together like prisoners?

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth."

Isaiah 24: 21

How many of the great Kings and high ones of the world had fallen from power during the 19th century?

Thinking of the history of the late 19th century, almost all the potentates of Europe had their sovereignties swept away within a short period of time including: Napoleon III of France, Czar Alexander II of Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany, Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, Sultan 'Abdu'l-Hamid of the Ottoman

Empire and Pope Pius IX, who had himself become a prisoner in the Vatican within Rome.

It was interesting to learn that Bahá'u'lláh, from His prison cell in 'Akká, Syria, a prison city of the Ottoman empire, wrote letters to many of the rulers of Europe including Pope Pius IX. With the exception of Queen Victoria of England, who responded to Bahá'u'lláh, the others ignored His call for justice.

O Kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God's, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Worship none but God, and, with radiant hearts, lift up your faces unto your Lord, the Lord of all names. This is a Revelation to which whatever ye possess can never be compared, could ye but know it.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 3

"Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace," He, admonishing the kings and rulers of the earth, has written, "hold ye fast unto this the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents." Expatiating on this Lesser Peace, He thus addresses in that same Tablet the rulers of the earth: "Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions... Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice."

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.162

NEW LAWS FROM GOD'S MOUNTAIN

Were the nations flowing unto it and was the law flowing from Zion?

Isaiah 2: 1-3

I learned that individual Bahá'ís had been continuously flowing into Israel (Zion) and onto Mount Carmel from the East, to make their pilgrimage since the time of the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh, 1868. Today pilgrims come from all parts of the world.

Was Bahá'u'lláh claiming to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement? Had He brought new laws?

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: Of sin because they believe not in me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye shall see me no more; Of Judgement, because the prince of this world is judged."

John 16: 8-11

Was there provision for the House of the Lord to be established on the top of the Mountain of the Lord?

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow onto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion.

Micah 4: 1-2

Zion is referenced as Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel. In a tablet, circa 1891, Bahá'u'lláh speaks to Mount Carmel, the mountain that has become the spiritual and administrative centre for the Bahá'ís. This is where the Seat of the Universal House of Justice has been built. Might this be considered the House of the Lord?

'Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendour is

revealed. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt. Hasten forth and circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven, the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favoured of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels. Oh, how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of this Revelation—a Revelation to which the heart of Sinai hath been attracted, and in whose name the Burning Bush is calling: "Unto God, the Lord of Lords, belong the kingdoms of earth and heaven." Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea rejoice at this announcement, the Day for which have been laid up those things which God, through a bounty beyond the ken of mortal mind or heart, hath destined for revelation. Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.'

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 4-5

Was the law going forth from this mountain of God?

Micah 4: 2

I discovered that Bahá'u'lláh had identified in His Writings and in His Most Holy Book, the Kitab-i-Aqdas, that in the future a Universal House of Justice would be established to ensure the continuity of that divinely appointed authority which flows from the Source of the Faith.

Elections were held in 1963 that brought the Universal House of Justice into being and have continued each five years thereafter.

Did Bahá'u'lláh bring His own doctrines or did He claim they were from God? Did He seek his own glory? Did any of his followers create their own doctrines?

Christ had set an example as the Son of God and told us that His doctrines were of God. He further accused those [who does "those" refer to here?] of creating their own doctrines as seeking their

own glory. I wondered how the followers of Christ could believe they had the authority to create their own doctrines when Christ said they should not do this? There are at least 1000 sects of Christianity, differentiated by differing doctrines. Had they been seeking their own glory?

"My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him"

John 7: 16-18

Bahá'u'lláh writes:

I implore Thee, O my Lord, by Thy name the splendors of which have encompassed the earth and the heavens, to enable me so to surrender my will to what Thou hast decreed in Thy Tablets, that I may cease to discover within me any desire except what Thou didst desire through the power of Thy sovereignty, and any will save what Thou didst destine for me by Thy will.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*,
p. 241

As previously mentioned the various sects of Christianity have been creating their own doctrines for centuries. I wondered how could the followers of Christ believe they had the authority to create their own doctrines when Christ said he could not have done this?

Have they each been seeking their own glory?

Bahá'u'lláh established laws revealed in His most Holy Book, the Kitab-i-Aqdas. He writes,

The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Day Spring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation...They whom God hath

endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples. He that turneth away from them, is accounted among the abject and foolish... O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures. Thus hath it been sent down from the heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Lord of Revelation.

Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!...

Whenever My laws appear like the sun in the heaven of Mine utterance, they must be faithfully obeyed by all, though My decree be such as to cause the heaven of every religion to be cleft asunder. He doth what He pleaseth. He chooseth; and none may question His choice.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 330-333

Of the more than one hundred volumes comprising the sacred Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is of unique importance. "To build anew the whole world" is the claim and challenge of His Message, and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is the Charter of the future world civilization that Bahá'u'lláh has come to raise up. Its provisions rest squarely on the foundation established by past religions, for, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, "This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future."

In this Revelation the concepts of the past are brought to a new level of understanding, and the social laws, changed to suit the age now dawning, are designed to carry humanity forward into a world civilization the splendours of which can as yet be scarcely imagined."

Introduction to *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, pp. 1-2

WHAT ABOUT THE PROMISED GOODLY FRUIT

Had Bahá'u'lláh exemplified examples of goodly fruits?

These were defined as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Galatians 5: 22-23

I discovered that Bahá'u'lláh had been imprisoned for nearly 40 years because of His writings and beliefs and was banished throughout the Persian and Ottoman empires. His writings spoke as this being a wonderful blessing from God. It seemed that He was not embittered by this. He speaks directly of what He considers to be goodly fruit.

If the learned and worldly-wise men of this age were to allow mankind to inhale the fragrance of fellowship and love, every understanding heart would apprehend the meaning of true liberty, and discover the secret of undisturbed peace and absolute composure.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 260

Say: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Verily I say, whatsoever leadeth to the decline of ignorance and the increase of knowledge hath been, and will ever remain, approved in the sight of the Lord of creation. Say: O people! Walk ye neath the shadow of justice and truthfulness and seek ye shelter within the tabernacle of unity.

Say: O ye that have eyes to see! The past is the mirror of the future. Gaze ye therein and be apprised thereof; perchance ye may be aided thereby to recognize the Friend and may be not the cause of His displeasure. In this Day the choicest fruit of the tree of knowledge is that which serveth the welfare of humanity and safeguardeth its interests.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tabernacle of Unity: Tablet to Mánikchí Šáhib* (Lawḥ-i-Mánikchí-Šáhib), p. 9-10

I finally had to answer the big question for myself: Did I think Bahá'u'lláh was a false prophet?

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ...even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit...Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Matthew 7: 15-20

"For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; providing what is acceptable unto the Lord."

Ephesians 5: 9-10

I had sampled the writings, teachings and a bit of the story of Bahá'u'lláh's life. What kind of tree had He planted? Were the fruits from the tree goodly? What did I see as the results of the community He had raised up after 150 years? Had the claims He made been fulfilled? Did He unite man and was there division in the community? Were there any sects or was this Faith one?

During the course of my investigations I had quietly visited several Bahá'í hosted events, met many people, watched videos and television programs and read. I asked questions of the followers about their lives as Bahá'ís.

I learned that the Bahá'ís had been given Non Governmental Organizational Status at the United Nations; that they were involved with positive endeavours the world over; that many followers still in Iran had been persecuted by continuous regimes and were still being persecuted. Some of the people I met had lost loved ones through these persecutions, yet they did not seem to be angry. They commented that they were following the writings and were not permitting violence to permeate their lives.

I learned that there was only one Bahá'í Faith and there were no sects or divisions. In fact this was quite amazing to me: a global community that had been raised and was united. I was unable to find any other communities in the world parallel with this example.

On reflection, it seemed that the tree Bahá'u'lláh had planted and the fruits it grew were indeed goodly fruit.

MAKING A DECISION

Based on Christ's command I felt in my heart that I had 'tested the spirits'. The answers I found convinced me that Bahá'u'lláh is the Spirit of Christ returned in the Glory of the Father. To be true to Christ, I must follow Bahá'u'lláh. For me there is no other choice. I threw in my lot and chose to participate with the rapidly increasing millions of people the world over who are putting Bahá'u'lláh's teachings into practice—transforming their lives and their communities—and striving to build a global civilization—fulfilling the promised vision of Christ and establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth.

I contacted a Bahá'í in my community and told her I wished to become a Bahá'í. I was asked to complete a small card to provide my name, address and contact information as well as professing my belief in Bahá'u'lláh. There were no rituals, ceremonies or other dogmas attached with becoming a Bahá'í. I was warmly welcomed into the community and given a schedule of when and where to attend the 19 Day Feasts as well as when and where other activities, devotional gathering and meetings were held.

It was beautifully simple.

I reflected on the prayer Jesus had given His followers.

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Matthew 6:10

INVESTIGATE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

I thought to myself that it was Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God who would usher in this new Kingdom on earth and I could play my part in this, however small that may be.

For those of you who may read this, I encourage you to 'test the spirits' for yourself. If you believe in Christ, do you have **any other option?**

I hope you find time to investigate! Please ask a Bahá'í if you need assistance. I did!

A FEW BASIC TEACHINGS AND INFORMATION

- There is and has always been only one God. Religious truth is progressive in nature. God has revealed truth through manifestations or prophets.
- Humanity is one and its unity is essential to its existence.
- There is only one Bahá'í Faith in the world and based on a Covenant brought by Bahá'u'lláh different sects cannot arise.
- It is the fastest growing Faith in the world.
(Source: 1992 Encyclopaedia Britannica Year Book)
- Geographically it is the second most widespread Faith and is found in over 233 countries and dependent territories
(Source: The Bahá'í World 2005-2006')
- It has non-governmental organizational status with the United Nations, as well as offices for the environment, for the advancement of women, health/development.



APPENDIX

The following tablet LAWH-I-AQDAS (The Most Holy Tablet, sometimes referred to as Tablet to the Christians) has been included so that the reader may appreciate and understand the potency and clarity with which Bahá'u'lláh addresses Christians.

This is the Most Holy Tablet sent down from the holy kingdom unto the one who hath set his face towards the Object of the adoration of the world, He Who hath come from the heaven of eternity, invested with transcendent glory.

In the name of the Lord, the Lord of great glory.

This is an Epistle from Our presence unto him whom the veils of names have failed to keep back from God, the Creator of earth and heaven, that his eyes may be cheered in the days of his Lord, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

Say, O followers of the Son! [Jesus] Have ye shut out yourselves from Me by reason of My Name? Wherefore ponder ye not in your hearts? Day and night ye have been calling upon your Lord, the Omnipotent, but when He came from the heaven of eternity in His great glory, ye turned aside from Him and remained sunk in heedlessness.

Consider those who rejected the Spirit [Jesus] when He came unto them with manifest dominion. How numerous the Pharisees who had secluded themselves in synagogues in His name, lamenting over their separation from Him, and yet when the portals of reunion were flung open and the divine Luminary

shone resplendent from the Dayspring of Beauty, they disbelieved in God, the Exalted, the Mighty. They failed to attain His presence, notwithstanding that His advent had been promised them in the Book of Isaiah as well as in the Books of the Prophets and the Messengers. No one from among them turned his face towards the Dayspring of divine bounty except such as were destitute of any power amongst men. And yet, today, every man endowed with power and invested with sovereignty prideth himself on His Name. Moreover, call thou to mind the one who sentenced Jesus to death. He was the most learned of his age in his own country, whilst he who was only a fisherman believed in Him. Take good heed and be of them that observe the warning.

Consider likewise, how numerous at this time are the monks who have secluded themselves in their churches, calling upon the Spirit, but when He appeared through the power of Truth, they failed to draw nigh unto Him and are numbered with those that have gone far astray. Happy are they that have abandoned them and set their faces towards Him Who is the Desire of all that are in the heavens and all that are on the earth.

They read the Evangel and yet refuse to acknowledge the All-Glorious Lord, notwithstanding that He hath come through the potency of His exalted, His mighty and gracious dominion. We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation. Flee ye the One Who hath sacrificed His life that ye may be quickened? Fear God, O followers of the Spirit, and walk not in the footsteps of every divine that hath gone far astray. Do ye imagine that He seeketh His own interests, when He hath, at all times, been threatened by the swords of the enemies; or that He seeketh the vanities of the world, after He hath been imprisoned in the most desolate of cities? Be fair in your judgement and follow not the footsteps of the unjust.

Open the doors of your hearts. He Who is the Spirit verily standeth before them. Wherefore banish ye Him Who hath purposed to draw you nigh unto a Resplendent Spot? Say: We, in truth, have opened unto you the gates of the Kingdom. Will ye bar the doors of your houses in My face? This indeed is naught but a grievous error. He, verily, hath again come down from heaven, even as He came down from it the first time. Beware lest ye dispute that which He proclaimeth, even as the people before you disputed His utterances. Thus instructeth you the True One, could ye but perceive it.

The river Jordan is joined to the Most Great Ocean, and the Son, in the holy vale, crieth out: 'Here am I, here am I O Lord, my God!', whilst Sinai circleth round the House, and the Burning Bush calleth aloud: 'He Who is the Desired One is come in His transcendent majesty.' Say, Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled! This is the Word which the Son concealed, when to those around Him He said: 'Ye cannot bear it now.' And when the appointed time was fulfilled and the Hour had struck, the Word shone forth above the horizon of the Will of God. Beware, O followers of the Son, that ye cast it not behind your backs. Take ye fast hold of it. Better is this for you than all that ye possess. Verily He is nigh unto them that do good. The Hour which We had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth and of the favoured angels hath come to pass. Say, verily, He hath testified of Me, and I do testify of Him. Indeed, He hath purposed no one other than Me. Unto this beareth witness every fair-minded and understanding soul.

Though beset with countless afflictions, We summon the people unto God, the Lord of names. Say, strive ye to attain that which ye have been promised in the Books of God, and walk not in the way of the ignorant. My body hath endured imprisonment that ye may be released from the bondage of self. Set your faces then towards His countenance and follow not the footsteps of every hostile

oppressor. Verily, He hath consented to be sorely abased that ye may attain unto glory, and yet, ye are disporting yourselves in the vale of heedlessness. He, in truth, liveth in the most desolate of abodes for your sakes, whilst ye dwell in your palaces.

Say, did ye not hearken to the Voice of the Crier, calling aloud in the wilderness of the Bayan, bearing unto you the glad-tidings of the coming of your Lord, the All-Merciful? Lo! He is come in the sheltering shadow of Testimony, invested with conclusive proof and evidence, and those who truly believe in Him regard His presence as the embodiment of the Kingdom of God. Blessed is the man who turneth towards Him, and woe betide such as deny or doubt Him.

Announce thou unto the priests: Lo! He Who is the Ruler is come. Step out from behind the veil in the name of thy Lord, He Who layeth low the necks of all men. Proclaim then unto all mankind the glad-tidings of this mighty, this glorious Revelation. Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His own self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Say, this is the One Who hath glorified the Son and hath exalted His Cause. Cast away, O peoples of the earth, that which ye have and take fast hold of that which ye are bidden by the All-Powerful, He Who is the Bearer of the Trust of God. Purge ye your ears and set your hearts towards Him that ye may hearken to the most wondrous Call which hath been raised from Sinai, the habitation of your Lord, the Most Glorious. It will, in truth, draw you nigh unto the Spot wherein ye will perceive the splendour of the light of His countenance which shineth above this luminous Horizon.

O concourse of priests! Leave the bells, and come forth, then, from your churches. It behoveth you, in this day, to proclaim aloud the Most Great Name among the nations. Prefer ye to be silent, whilst every stone and every tree shouteth aloud: 'The Lord is

come in His great glory!''? Well is it with the man who hasteneth unto Him. Verily, he is numbered among them whose names will be eternally recorded and who will be mentioned by the Concourse on High. Thus hath it been decreed by the Spirit in this wondrous Tablet. He that summoneth men in My name is, verily, of Me, and he will show forth that which is beyond the power of all that are on earth. Follow ye the Way of the Lord and walk not in the footsteps of them that are sunk in heedlessness. Well is it with the slumberer who is stirred by the Breeze of God and ariseth from amongst the dead, directing his steps towards the Way of the Lord. Verily, such a man is regarded, in the sight of God, the True One, as a jewel amongst men and is reckoned with the blissful.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 7-11

